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Dear Chairman Pai:

I write to support the Comments of Massachusetts Community Media, Inc. (MassAccess) and the Cable Act Preservation Alliance (CAPA) to disapprove of the proposals and tentative conclusions set forth in the FCC's September 25 Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making in *Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992*, MB Docket 05- 311.

I am an employee of Watertown Cable Access Corp. in Watertown, Massachusetts. I have been an employee here for nearly three years and work as our Community Engagement Coordinator. I am writing today to implore you to please rethink your decision regarding Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984. Community Access stations are vitally important to the patchwork of this country. Community media provides one of the only major democratic outlets for citizens to truly let their voices be heard. They can come to their local station and create a show, PSA, podcast, any form of media they prefer and broadcast it to their local community. Cable Access stations provide access to local government proceedings for hearing impaired individuals by including closed captions on broadcasts of government meetings. It helps instill civic duty in school-aged children across the country by promoting community involvement. It helps senior citizens who are unable to leave their homes still have access to information of what is happening in their towns. Local media helps keep local governments honest; studies show local governments tend to spend less in areas with local media outlets. We provide an incredibly important resource to citizens across the entire country. By voting in favor of these proposed rule changes, the FCC is destroying a vital part of our communities.

This new policy proposes changing the definition of "Franchise Fees" - a term that has been in existence for over thirty years. The FCC does not hold the right to change the definition of this term. We have been operating under this definition since its creation in 1984 and the FCC has no right to roll this back and create a new definition. Any attempt to change this definition directly

weakens the authority of local municipalities. In addition, each station holds their own, individual and private franchise contracts with cable companies. The FCC does not have the right to change or interfere with private contracts already in existence. The current policy states plainly “[a]ny Federal agency may not regulate the amount of the franchise fees paid by a cable operator.”

Community media stations allow the residents of Watertown, Massachusetts, and beyond, to watch and create uniquely local programming about their community and local events and issues of interest to them. Such was the intent of the PEG provisions of the 1984 Cable Act – to enhance local voices, serve local community needs and interests, and strengthen our local democracy. By defining “franchise fee” in an overly broad fashion to include “in-kind” support, the FCC’s proposals will shift the fair balance between cable franchising authorities and cable operators and will force communities to choose between franchise fees and PEG channels, – something that was never the intent of the Act.

We appreciate your consideration and hope you will protect PEG channels in our community and others by choosing not to adopt many of the proposals in the Further Notice.

Sincerely,
Samantha Dudley
Community Engagement Coordinator
Watertown Cable Access Corp.

